



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 31, 2008

## **FACT SHEET**

### **MAYOR SANDERS CALLS ON SAN DIEGANS TO INCREASE VOLUNTARY WATER CONSERVATION EFFORTS**

#### ***MAYOR OFFERS EXAMPLES OF WATER-WISE PLANTS FOR SAN DIEGO***

Mayor Jerry Sanders is continuing his call for San Diegans to increase their voluntary water conservation efforts. The Mayor joined leaders of the City's Water Department at the Miramar Wholesale Nursery to describe how choosing "California Friendly" plants can help achieve water conservation goals and reduce water costs for local residents.

#### **CHOOSING WATER-WISE PLANTS IS THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR SAN DIEGO**

The Mayor is encouraging San Diego residents to select "California Friendly" plants as they prepare for the spring planting season. The "California Friendly" label was developed by Metropolitan Water District of Southern California to help customers identify plants that are suitable to San Diego's climate. Most are labeled with a distinctive orange Poppy with a blue background in local nursery displays.

The plants included in the "California Friendly" list are drought tolerant, use as much as 40% less water than traditional landscape choices and have the added benefit of being fire resistant making them good choices for landscaping homes in the City's fire zones. These plants also tend to require less fertilization and are more resistant to pests. That means residents can save water while gaining the added benefit of reducing the use of pesticides which can run off into our storm drains potentially leading to pollution of San Diego's rivers, bays and beaches.

#### **EASY STEPS FOR ENDING OVER-IRRIGATION**

Building on a key theme from his State of the City address, Mayor Sanders is also calling on San Diegans to end the over irrigation of their yards. Ending over-irrigation can help residents achieve substantial water savings outdoors where most of San Diego's water supplies are used.

The Mayor joins the City Water Department in recommending that everyone pay close attention to the settings on irrigation timers. Many homeowners are unaware of optimum watering cycles for their landscape and give plants more water than they need. Significant water savings can be achieved by simply adjusting sprinkler timers to match plant watering needs.

There are several City programs that can help San Diegans determine optimum irrigation cycles including:

1. **Water Use Surveys** - Commercial and residential customers can call the City at (619) 570-1999 to request a survey. A trained professional will assess the current irrigation system, look for inefficiencies, and develop a customized irrigation schedule for homeowners. This service is provided free of charge.
2. **The Landscape Watering Calculator** – Homeowners interested in getting started on better irrigation practices immediately can log on to [www.sandiego.gov/water](http://www.sandiego.gov/water) and click on the Landscape Watering Calculator tab. This nationally recognized tool lets homeowners follow a few simple steps to develop a customized irrigation schedule for their yards.
3. **Weather-based irrigation Controllers** – These “smart” controllers automatically adjust run times as the season and daytime temperatures change, and shut irrigation systems during rainy days. The City of San Diego currently offers substantial rebates for these irrigation controllers. Call (619) 570-1999, or visit [www.sandiego.gov/water](http://www.sandiego.gov/water) for more information on the rebate program.
4. **The Commercial Landscape Incentive Program** – In addition to the “smart” controller rebated program, commercial landscape property owners can also avail themselves of incentives for other water efficient irrigation fixtures. Call (619) 570-1999, or visit [www.sandiego.gov/water](http://www.sandiego.gov/water) for more information on these incentives.

#### **MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WATER-WISE GARDENING**

To assist in selecting ‘California Friendly’ plants, the City of San Diego Water Department has worked with the Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College and others to develop a list of ‘Nifty Fifty’ plants particularly well suited to San Diego. These are non-invasive and generally available at local nurseries.

The Nifty Fifty list may be easily downloaded at <http://www.sandiego.gov/water /conservation>.

A complete listing of nurseries and addresses featuring water-wise plants may be found at the Water Conservation Garden’s website at <http://www.thegarden.org>.

Located at Cuyamaca College, the 4½-acre Garden offers a variety of classes on many topics related to gardening and landscaping, for homeowners, children, and landscape professionals. It also has an extensive garden of ‘California Friendly’ plants, and a variety of exhibits about water-wise landscape design, maintenance, and irrigation. For more information, visit the Garden’s website or call (619) 660-0614.